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November 13, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Mark Rey
Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment

The Honorable Dale Bosworth
Chief of the United States Forest Service

United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Gentleman:

Dear Mike —

Throughout my two terms as Governor, I have made it a priority to preserve and protect the valuable natural resources that make our state special. For over 100 years, the state of Colorado has worked closely with the U.S. Forest Service in the effective management of our National Forests. It is in the spirit of that legacy that I submit Colorado's formal Roadless Area recommendations for your review.

Few things are more important to Coloradans than the responsible stewardship of our National Forests. The scenic landscapes, abundant wildlife and mountain vistas make Colorado such a wonderful place to live and raise a family. Our National Forests provide unequalled recreational opportunities enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. These resources also include significant reserves of coal, natural gas and other deposits that are vital to our country's efforts to achieve long-term energy independence. The importance of these reserves to our nation should not be understated. It is because our National Forests offer such diverse and beneficial opportunities that they are often the source of complicated debate as to how they should best be managed.

As Governor, it is my responsibility to weigh all of Colorado's interests and submit a petition that reflects the concerns of the entire state. In order to meet that objective, I signed legislation creating a 13-member bipartisan task force to provide official recommendations regarding the management of roadless areas in our National Forests.

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The statute required the task force to conduct thorough public meetings as well as consider written comments, so that all Coloradans would have the opportunity to participate in this process. Over the past year, the task force held nine public meetings throughout the state, reviewed over 40,000 public comments and conducted a comprehensive review of Colorado's four-million-acres of Inventoried Roadless areas.

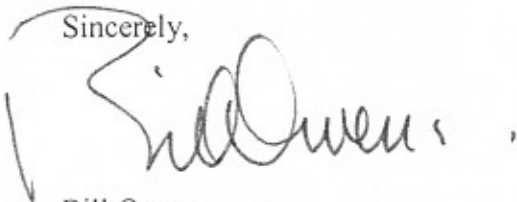
The attached petition which I am submitting is consistent with the requirements set forth in 36 CFR part 294(b)(2005) ("the 2005 Rule"). As you are aware, the 2005 Rule was invalidated in Cal. ex rel. Lockyer v. United States Dep't of Agric., 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 72226, 52 (D. Cal. 2006). The petition is also consistent with the 7 CFR 1.28 and should be considered as a petition for rulemaking under 5 U.S.C. 553(e) if the U.S. District Court decision cited above is not overturned.

I am appreciative of the opportunity afforded us by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to offer recommendations on an issue that is so important to Colorado. This cooperative approach to decision-making is critical to ensure that citizens have a strong voice in the process and ultimately support the management decision. Although lengthy and at times arduous, the process authorized by the 2005 Rule and undertaken by Colorado has proven to be valuable. The petition I am submitting regarding management recommendations is unchanged from the recommendations I received from the task force. I have added a comment entitled "Drafting and use of terms" regarding the drafting process, with the expectation that the language in the final rule will use currently accepted terms.

I commend the task force for their commitment to this important process and I am honored to submit Colorado's Inventoried Roadless Areas Petition on behalf of our state.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the attached petition and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bill Owens", is written over a large, light-colored circular mark.

Bill Owens
Governor